

THE BLIND ARE LIKE THAT

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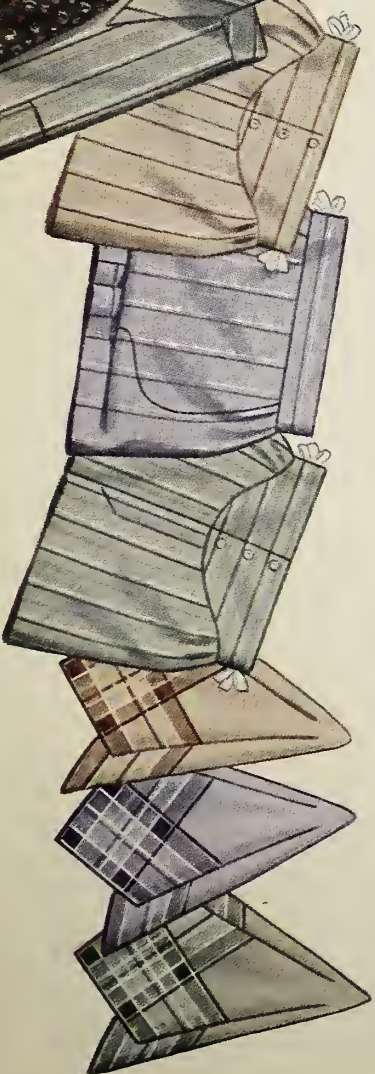
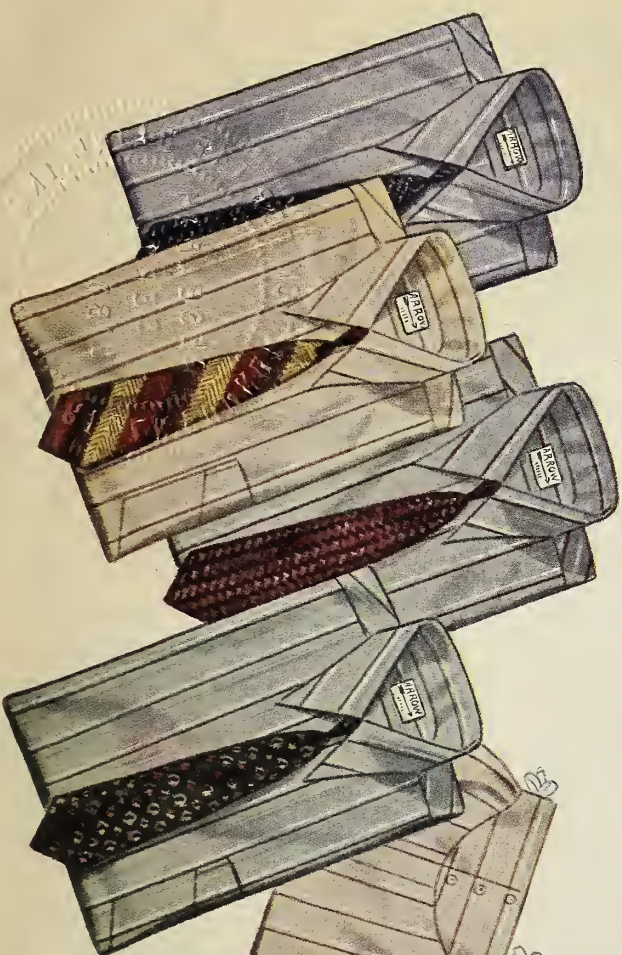
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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**



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A POST ONE-PAGER

THE BLIND ARE LIKE THAT

By STELLA E. MORGAN

I WAS afraid to visit The Lighthouse because, as I explained to my friend, I could not bear to see blind people. My friend smiled and persisted. So, presently, there I was, sitting in a quiet room where a volunteer worker was reading to a group of little children. In the middle of a tale about frogs, a tot of four spoke up.

"What does a frog look like?" she asked.

"Watch me!" cried a girl of five.

She leaped from her seat and hopped about the room in an imitation which the others enjoyed and apparently understood, even though none of them could see it.

"Let's start at the top and work straight down," I whispered to my friend. "I don't want to miss anything."

We went up to the roof of The Lighthouse, the New York Association for the Blind, and found children playing in the sun. A small boy pulled an express wagon around and around. Others were engaged in a game of hide-and-seek among tall boxes. I went into a room filled with cots on which the children take their naps. From here I saw the bathroom with its rows of towels. Below every towel was a little block, each of a different shape and a different color. I watched the children find their towels by means of these blocks.

"What help are the colors?" I asked.

"Oh, they love colors," the nurse replied. . . . "Marian, what color is your block?"

"Blue."

"And what is blue?" I asked.

"Like the sky," said this child who has never seen the sky.

"But how do you know the sky is blue?"

"It's blue," Marian insisted. "It's blue, all right."

On the floor below, we visited a large workshop. Men, strong young men with pleasant faces, were weaving baskets; they never mislaid the scissors that trimmed the strands. Weave, clip—weave, clip. Others sat at a long table and sorted rivets for an airplane factory. There were many different sizes in a great box, but swift, intelligent fingers placed each rivet in its proper compartment. Watching them, it was hard to realize that these men were blind, for there was no confusion, no fumbling.

When a man came walking rapidly toward me, the illusion that he could see was so complete that I forgot to move. He ran full into me, then apologized. Introductions followed and we shook hands.

I stopped in the doorway of the Braille-press room. A young woman was setting type for a magazine in Braille. At another machine a tall girl with blond hair and a lovely figure was feeding type-set pages into a huge iron mouth that alternately clanked open and shut. She laid a page inside, lifted it out, laid another in. She kept working while we talked. I feared for her hands, but when I mentioned this she smiled, humoring me, and went on with her job, competent and unafraid.

In the sewing room we watched women at work on electric machines. Finished dresses and aprons hung on racks. I examined them. The work was far better than I, with two good eyes, could have done.

Then I met Lillian Hillman, an expert stenographer, and watched her fingers fly over the keys. Next I went into the office of Mr. Anthony E. Septinelli, field agent of The Lighthouse Placement

Department. A man of about forty, Mr. Septinelli seems quite unhampered by his blindness.

When I asked if I might smoke, for example, he deftly pushed an ash tray across his desk until it stood right at my elbow. His personality is inspiring, and I have rarely met so interesting a conversationalist.

During the year 1941, I learned, there were 4203 blind people registered at The Lighthouse. Of these, 468 had been afflicted recently. A total of 493 were sent to clinics and doctors for possible help, and some recovered partial sight.

We were still talking when a blind man came in, hunting a job. Mr. Septinelli showed him to a seat, spoke about taking charge of a newsstand in a hotel lobby, and later escorted him to the elevator. I was wondering how the man could possibly handle paper money and make change. Mr. Septinelli's explanation cleared up the mystery—he will fold dollar bills lengthwise and five-dollar bills crosswise.

"But suppose he's asked to change a ten?"

The heart-warming story
of the people who are
seeking a substitute for
sight—and finding it.

*Saturday Evening
Post. V. 215, No. 23, Dec. 5,
1941*

I visited singing classes. I watched a blind teacher give a piano lesson to a blind child who later played a little solo while her father, listening with misted eyes, turned to me.

"Someday," he whispered, "I'll sit in a large audience and hear her play."

I saw a performance by a group of blind girls known as The Lighthouse Players. One poured tea and another passed it. There was no uncertainty or self-consciousness.

A producer in the audience said, "I never saw anything like it."

One of those girls is to have a part on Broadway soon. No one will suspect that she is blind, for she will memorize every step she takes on the stage.

When I asked what other work is available for the blind, I was told that they may also become teachers, lawyers, messengers, counter-men, packers, electrical-factory workers, punch-press operators, as well as storekeepers in shops selling candy and tobacco. And there is now a Braille shorthand



RICHARD BEATTIE

Children play and older folk learn a myriad of crafts and trades at The Lighthouse, New York's famous institution for the blind. A group gathered for tea around the piano.

"He'd either ask the customer himself to go out and change it," said Mr. Septinelli, "or he'd hold it up and get the desk clerk, or someone else he knew, to confirm the amount of the bill."

Mr. Septinelli is married to a sighted woman who has forgotten that he is blind. He takes her out to dine and dance. At home she reads to him, he plays the piano for her. They walk together, discuss books, talk of their work. Only when she moves a piece of furniture and forgets to tell him does he stop and say, "What's been changed in here?"

"Forgive me for asking," I said, "but are you really happy?"

"I've made for myself a world without a blemish," he replied, "and my eyes can never contradict what I see."

machine that blind stenographers use for taking down dictation.

On the front cover of The Lighthouse Log for 1941 is a photograph of two girls feeding pigeons in a churchyard. One girl is blind, the other a volunteer worker. The caption of the picture is Hope for the Blind.

This hope, I think, also extends to the sighted, for no sighted person can visit the blind without benefiting thereby. Surely, no one could make a tour of The Lighthouse and see those miracles of courage and cheer without feeling stirred and exalted and humble; without feeling just as I did when I got outside and looked at my friend through eyes stinging with tears.

"I never dreamed the blind were like that."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

...IN MODERN DRESS



1 Marley was dead. Unfortunately Scrooge, of Scrooge & Marley, was not. It was the day before Christmas, and instead of bonuses, Scrooge gave Bob Cratchit and others in his employ resounding Bronx cheers. "Phooey on Christmas. Phooey on nice clothes. Phooey on everything," said Scrooge at the end of the day's business.



2 That night three visions came to Scrooge as he lay in bed. One was a shirt with the handsomest pattern and collar he'd ever seen. One was a tie that harmonized so beautifully with the shirt that he thought angels were singing. Third was a fine handkerchief that chimed in brilliantly. They announced themselves as "Arrow Carol Tones."



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